

- **Sign Up Established for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Following Hurricane Sandy Damage**
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Sign Up Established for Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) Following Hurricane Sandy Damage

Bristol/Norfolk/Suffolk County USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director Julie Viveiros, recently announced that the official signup for cost-share assistance under the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) began on November 30, 2012 and ends on January 29, 2013. [Owners of farmland in Bristol County](#) who suffered severe damage from Hurricane Sandy may be eligible for assistance under ECP. While the USDA-FSA has already been accepting applications from farmland owners; this announces an official signup period that is required by program regulations.

A farmland owner qualifying for ECP assistance may receive financial assistance levels not to exceed 75 percent of the eligible cost of restoration measures which are aimed at restoring farm related resources. The following types of measures may be eligible:

- EC1 Removing Debris From Farmland
- EC3 Restoring Permanent Fences

To be eligible for assistance, practices must not be started until all of the following are met:

- an application for financial assistance (FSA-848) has been filed
- the local FSA County Committee (COC) or its representative has conducted an onsite inspection of the damaged area
- the Agency responsible for technical assistance, such as the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has made a needs determination

Farmland owners in Bristol County who may have suffered a loss should contact the following USDA, Farm Service Agency office: Bristol/Norfolk/Suffolk County Farm Service Agency, 104 Dean Street, Suite 204, Taunton, MA, (508) 880-0185, julie.viveiros@ma.usda.gov.

CISA's Winter Workshop Series on Financial Management and Decision Making

CISA (Community Involved in Sustaining Agriculture) will hold a seven-workshop series entitled “Financial Management and Business Decision Making” in Western Massachusetts starting in January. The series will help farmers learn to use financial management tools to support business decision making and implement these skills to evaluate new market opportunities and major investment decisions. For a full schedule of workshops, visit <http://www.buylocalfood.org/page.php?id=27>.

Participants that attend a minimum of three workshops (including the first session) plus one of the working group sessions will receive additional one-on-one technical assistance. Dinner will be served at each session. Cost to attend the series is \$60 for Local Hero Members, or \$12 per workshop. The non-member fee is \$75 for the series, \$15 per workshops. To register, contact Devon Whitney-Deal at devon@buylocalfood.org or 413-665-7100 x 22.

New England's Largest Agricultural Marketing Conference and Trade Show Returns to Sturbridge, MA February 27 - 28

[Early Registration is Now Open!](#) A full early conference registration includes all general and breakout sessions, 2 lunches, the trade show and reception – all for \$90! Additional representatives from the same farm pay only \$75! The Harvest New England Ag Marketing Conference and Trade Show is a program sponsored by the six New England Departments of Agriculture.

Join hundreds of farmers on February 27 and 28 from across the region at the Sturbridge Host Hotel and Conference Center for New England's largest agricultural marketing conference. Twenty-six workshops, covering agri-tourism, strategic marketing, using social media, financial planning, and lots more, will provide growers with tools to increase their sales in today's competitive marketplace.

Keynote speakers include Roberta MacDonald, Senior Vice President of Marketing for Cabot Creamery who will share some marketing tips and ways to grow customers when you have little time and money. Retail marketing expert Bob Burke will speak on “The Dynamics of Food Trends in the Northeast.” A general session will feature a facilitated discussion with the agricultural chiefs/commissioners from New England, including DAR Commissioner Gregory Watson.

The conference will also include a New England Farmers' Market Managers workshop on Wednesday, February 27. Participants can meet with dozens of agricultural service providers in conjunction with the conference. Attendees will have full access to the trade show. Trade show hours are 3:15 pm to 7:00 pm on February 27, allowing nearly 4 hours to walk the show. A reception will also be held in the trade show hall during this time. On February 28, the trade show will be open from 7:30 am – 3:15 pm.

A wide range of companies will exhibit, including representatives of farm equipment, fertilizer, seed, insurance, packaging, federal, state and non-profit agencies, specialty food companies, co-packers and more. A complete list of exhibitors to date can be found on the conference website. A full early conference registration includes all general and breakout sessions, 2 lunches, the trade show and reception – all for \$90! Additional representatives from the same farm pay only \$75! The Harvest New England Ag Marketing Conference and Trade Show is a program sponsored by the six New England Departments of Agriculture. [For complete conference details and to register, click here.](#)

Cost-Reducing Strategies for Dairy and Livestock Operations

A Northern New England Collaborative Event

January 17, 2013, 10:00 am – 3:15 pm

UMass Crop and Animal Research and Education Ctr, 89-91 River Rd, South Deerfield MA

There has never been a greater need to think seriously about managing for long-term success: maximizing the impact of every dollar invested in farm operations, capitalizing on opportunities, and avoiding common pitfalls. Following issues will be discussed:

- Reducing shrink on your farm
- Alternative nutrient sources and nutrient management
- Beating high feed costs
- Maximizing forage quality
- High forage dairy diets
- Selecting profitable corn hybrids
- Modern vaccination program
- Other locally relevant topics

Attendees will enjoy interactive presentations, discussions, lunch and refreshments with UMass, UNH, UVM and UMaine faculty and Extension Educators. 3.5 CCA credits will be offered!

For more information and directions contact Mallory Ottariano, 413-545-5221, mottaria@psis.umass.edu.

Registration and Information at:

<http://extension.umass.edu/cdle/events/cost-reducing-strategies-livestock-and-dairy-operations>



MDAR's mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation & Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health, and Crop and Pest Services – MDAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth's agricultural community to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit MDAR's website at mass.gov/agr, and/or follow at twitter.com/MDARCommish. For our ongoing list of events and workshops [click here](#).